

NEW JERSEY LICENSED BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION
92ND ANNUAL CONVENTION



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President's Message

It is my honor and privilege to welcome you to the New Jersey Licensed Beverage Association's (NJLBA) 92nd Annual Convention. As I complete my first year as President, I am reminded that while much has changed in the hospitality industry since our inception in the early 1930s, some things have remained constant. As we celebrate the industry's achievements this week—accomplished over multiple decades—the Association remains today the same dedicated and committed organization that was founded many years ago.

The NJLBA has, and will continue to, play an active and critical role in ensuring the integrity of our members' liquor licenses, while also serving as a strong, united voice for our industry in both the State House and legislative halls. This week, as we gather in Atlantic City, we represent not just our past but the future of our industry. I firmly believe that the future is filled with growth and prosperity, and that together, there is nothing we cannot overcome.

I want to stress the importance of maintaining your NJLBA membership and strongly urge you to share this message with other licensees. We all know someone who is not yet a member but should be. I challenge each of you, in the months ahead, to reach out to licensees in your town and explain the value and good work of the NJLBA. Without this Association, we would face the prospect of \$25,000- \$50,000 unlimited new liquor licenses being issued throughout the state—a change that would have a direct impact on the value of your business.

By standing together in the coming year, we can ensure our voices are heard by our representatives, the Governor's Office, and our fellow licensees. We have many challenges ahead. There are two bills in the Assembly that we hope to see advance during the lame duck session, both of which would greatly benefit licensees across the state:

- **A-5313** (Atkins) would allow holders of plenary retail consumption licenses to conduct sports pools on their licensed premises, provided the licensee (the house) does not take a cut.
- **A-5311** (Atkins) would require the NJABC to consider mitigating circumstances when determining fines and suspensions for Title 33 violations.

This week's robust agenda demonstrates the ongoing need for the latest information on issues impacting our businesses. After the lame duck session concludes in January 2025, we will see many new representatives in Trenton. With that in mind, we must continue to grow our membership and strengthen our PAC accounts to support legislators who champion our industry's goals. Our Association's lobbyist will be available this week to update all attendees on these critical matters.

In closing, I would like to extend a special thank you to our Convention sponsors, Allied members, Journal advertisers, and industry partners for making the NJLBA's 92nd Annual Convention possible. To all who attended—especially our members—thank you for taking time away from your businesses to join us. Your commitment to the Association is the reason our conventions succeed every year. I am also deeply grateful to our Executive Director, Diane Weiss, and Office Manager, Lori Rosati, for their unwavering dedication to our Association.

I hope you all enjoy the convention, and I look forward to meeting you this week.

– Reggie Hyde, *President*

Executive Director's Message

As the Executive Director of the New Jersey Licensed Beverage Association (NJLBA), it's my honor to welcome you to our 92nd Annual Convention. The past few years have undoubtedly been challenging for bars, restaurants, and taverns, but this convention—and our Association—remain enduring symbols of our industry's strength and resilience. Despite rising food and beverage prices, tariffs, ongoing staffing shortages, and an evolving legislative landscape, I am proud to say that we have risen to meet these challenges together.

This week's convention reflects the ever-changing needs of the hospitality industry and the most pressing concerns facing licensees today. Within this journal, you'll find the agenda with all training sessions, panel discussions, and workshops designed to keep you informed and empowered. The convention also offers a unique forum to connect and exchange ideas with legislative leaders, ABC staff, our executive board, our lobbyist, and our Regional and County Directors. It's an excellent opportunity to engage not only with fellow licensees, but also with policymakers who play a pivotal role in our industry's future. I am confident that you will leave this week with valuable insights and renewed inspiration for your business.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to our convention speakers, sponsors, affiliate members, journal advertisers, and industry partners for their steadfast support in making this event possible. Special thanks to NJLBA President Reggie Hyde, our Executive Board, and County Directors for their dedication throughout the past year, and to all attendees for taking time out of your busy schedules to join us. I also extend my appreciation to our lobbyist, Jeffrey A. Warsh, Esq., whose leadership and advocacy have been instrumental in guiding us through complex industry issues and ensuring our voice is heard in Trenton. Additionally, thank you to our Office Manager, Lori Rosati, for your hard work and commitment throughout the year.

As we gather this week, let's continue to work together through the upcoming legislative cycle and beyond. Without your passion and involvement, this convention would not be possible. I look forward to meeting you, sharing in our collective successes, and wishing everyone a safe and prosperous holiday season and a happy, healthy 2026. Cheers!

– Diane M. Weiss, NJLBA Executive Director





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Attorney General

TAHESHA L. WAY
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KIRSTIN L. KRUEGER
Interim Director

November 10, 2025

Dear members of the New Jersey Licensed Beverage Association:

Thank you for the opportunity to address the members of the New Jersey Licensed Beverage Association (NJLBA) on the occasion of your Annual Convention. On behalf of the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control, I want to thank the NJLBA for continuing to provide your expertise on the ever-evolving alcoholic beverage industry.

ABC has been very busy this past year. After New Jersey announced that the 2025 FIFA Club World Cup and 2026 FIFA World Cup final would take place at New Jersey's Met Life Stadium, ABC has worked side-by-side with the New Jersey State Police, the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, MetLife Stadium officials, and officials from the Governor's Office to help develop a safe and secure environment for the soccer community. The 2025 Club World Cup went off without a hitch, and ABC is now concentrating its efforts on ensuring successful events surrounding the upcoming 2026 World Cup. ABC will continue to be a resource for your members as they contemplate holding safe and responsible events related to the World Cup at their licensed establishments.

In November 2024, Governor Murphy signed legislation making COVID-19 outdoor dining permanent and extending the COVID-19 Expansion of Premises permits issued by ABC until November 30, 2025, or until the licensee is issued a Premises Expansion Permit. The new Premises Expansion Permit will expire every June 30 and will need to be renewed each year. We hope this continues to be a viable option for licensees interested in providing outdoor dining to its customers in the future.

The NJLBA provided much needed feedback and assistance to the Division as we worked to put forth regulations for the first time in many years. ABC's goal with these regulations is to provide clarity and consistency, which will allow all licensees to compete on an even playing field. In 2026, the Division intends to propose new regulations on topics that may include bill and hold, trade practices, and disclosure policy. The Division will also work with the NJLBA on important advisories affecting the licensed beverage industry.

The Division values its relationship with the NJLBA and looks forward to working on the important issues facing the industry and the people of the State of New Jersey in 2026.

Very truly yours,

KIRSTIN L. KRUEGER
Interim Director





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From the Statehouse Lobby

by Jeffrey A. Warsh, Esq.

Welcome to the Annual edition of “From the Statehouse Lobby.” Here goes... on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, Mikie Sherill was convincingly elected as the 57th Governor of the State of New Jersey and General Assembly Speaker Coughlin added at least 6 new Assembly Members by flipping GOP seats to Democrat. A hearty NJLBA congratulations to Governor-elect Mikie Sherill, to Speaker Coughlin and to all the newly-elected and re-elected Members of the General Assembly. Now it is time to dig in and start taking small business issues and liquor industry issues seriously.

The NJLBA took advantage of our many opportunities to discuss our pressing issues with Mikie Sherill throughout the primaries and up to the General Election. We discussed the dram shop insurance crisis, the need for some additional license reform to get it right, the problematic nexus between alcoholic beverages and cannabis products, the harsh unfairness of the NJABC’s strict liability standards and other issues of importance to NJLBA Members. What the NJLBA discovered from our conversations is that Mikie Sherill is a great listener who demonstrated deep concern for small and family-owned businesses and for driving up the competence levels of the government agencies regulating the private sector.

The NJLBA salutes Jack Ciattarelli for all of his support for the NJLBA over the years, for running an impressive campaign and for showing the class associated with conceding the race to Mikie Sherill – like a gentleman.

Here Comes the Lame Duck Session!

New Jersey’s current legislative session, the 221st Legislative Session, began on January 9, 2024 and will end, at noon, on January 13, 2026. Before the 221st Legislature turns the lights off, however, that most disturbing of all biennial phenomena will live and breathe again – the Lame Duck Session. The Lame Duck Session began on November 10th and will conclude at 11:59 a.m. on January 13, 2026 – with the swearing in of the 222nd Legislature and of Governor-Elect Mikie Sherill.

During the Lame Duck Session, it is common for bills that saw no real movement during the regular legislative session to suddenly fly through a rapid committee hearing process, floor votes and reach the Governor’s desk. Any bills not receiving a majority in the affirmative in both houses and the Governor’s signature are dead bills and the process must, at the sponsor’s discretion, start all over again in the new legislative session. At the end of his second, and final, term, Governor Murphy has the constitutional authority to absolute veto any bills, to conditionally veto bills (this power allows the Governor to both delete and write in language to a bill) and, finally, to pocket veto bills. In a pocket veto, the Governor takes no action on a bill and leaves office. The bill is dead.

Specifically with respect to liquor industry issues expected during Lame Duck, we anticipate that Senator Gopal will introduce and move a bill to amend the recent law on inactive licenses to make it easier to purchase, transfer and operate licenses now classified as inactive. The bill re-sets the clock on revocation due to inactivity to August of 2024, providing all inactive licenses as of August, 2024 with an additional two years to activate. Of note, Senator Gopal’s bill also allows inactive licenses to move to any town within the county and to contiguous towns in other counties and removes the body of water impediment to town contiguity.

It appears likely that bills covering federally legal, hemp-derived products will also be heard. The leading Assembly bill permits on-premises consumption licensees to sell

continued on next page

From the Statehouse Lobby *continued*

hemp-derived beverages, while the leading Senate bill does not allow for on-premises consumption. Stay tuned and weigh in on this issue!

While the NJLBA typically finds itself in a defensive posture, beating back industry threats, I am encouraged to hear from Assemblyman Reginald Atkins (Chairman, Assembly Regulatory Oversight Committee) that he will move two pieces of legislation during Lane Duck:

- A-5313 (Atkins) - Allows holders of plenary retail consumption licenses to conduct sports pools on their licensed premises, as long as the licensee (the house) does not take a cut.
- A5311 (Atkins) - Requires the NJABC to take mitigating circumstances into account when determining fines and suspensions for Title 33 violations.

The NJLBA threat matrix continues to include many bills seeking to benefit various NJ producers of craft alcoholic beverages. From the craft brewers seeking selling outlets all over the State of NJ to the possibility of craft producers being able to cross-carry all of the other NJ craft alcoholic beverages, thus creating homegrown bars and liquor stores, the NJLBA has its defensive hands full. However, we also have our eyes focused clearly on seeking positive change for our continually challenged on-premises sector Members.

Stay tuned and... please continue to answer the NJLBA calls for action. Please come to Trenton to testify. Please stay in close contact with your Mayors, County Commissioners, Senators and Assembly members. And, as always, please contribute to the NJLBA PAC – the mother's milk of politics.

Cheers! See you in Trenton!

The image shows a law office advertisement. The top half features a photograph of a wooden gavel resting on a stack of books, with a pair of brass scales of justice in the foreground. The bottom half is a black banner with yellow and white text.

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Convention Agenda:

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

- 9:00 am **Registration Desk Opens** – Atlantic 1
- 10:00 am to 3:00 pm **ServSafe Training** – Atlantic Ballroom A&B
- 10:00 am to 1:00 pm **NJ Brass Training** – Atlantic Ballroom C&D
- 5:00 pm **Hospitality Room Opens** (Light Refreshments)

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

Resorts Conference Level - Horizon Ballroom

- 8:30 am to 10:30 am **Continental Breakfast**
- 8:30 am **Registration Desk Opens** – Horizon Ballroom Foyer
- 9:15 am to 9:45 am Closed Session NJLBA Executive Board and NJLBA Licensee Members Only – NJLBA Business –
- 9:45 am **Welcome Address** - General Session
- 10:00 am to 11:00 am **"ICE Workplace Raids: Best Practices and Preparation,"**
Presented by Caroline Murphy, Esq. Chiesa Shahinian & Giantomasi PC
- 11:00 am to 12:00 pm **The Big Beautiful Bill-** No Tax on Tips or Overtime,
Presented by Hiten Patel, Senior Tax Manager, CPA, MST, Withum
- 12:00 pm to 12:30 pm **Affiliate Member Presentations**
- 12:30– 1:15pm **Luncheon** – Atlantic Ballroom –

Return to Horizon Ballroom

- 1:15 pm to 2:00 pm **Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control Seminar**
Presented by Interim Director Kirsten Krueger and staff
- 2:00 pm **Break** – Snacks and coffee in the room
- 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm **NJ Labor Laws Rules**, Presented by Abdiel Custodio, Section Chief, Inspection for Strategic and General Enforcement, NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development
- 3:00 pm – 3:30 pm **Legislative Update**, Presented NJLBA Lobbyist Jeffrey A. Warsh, Esq.; Partner MBI
- 6:00- 8:00 pm **Cocktail Reception and Buffet Dinner** – Atlantic Ballroom
Presentation of Retailer of the Year Award



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Good Luck to Reggie Hyde, 2025 NJLBA President

All the Best,

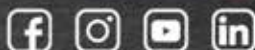
Jim Filler, NJLBA President, 2018 – 2024

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NJLBA Past Presidents' Club

This page is dedicated to the past presidents of the New Jersey Licensed Beverage Association.

We recognize not only these very dedicated individuals, but also those who have gone before us. All of these leaders gave so much of their time and expertise in founding and fostering our trade organization which represents the concerns and issues facing on-premise retailers and the beverage alcohol industry.

Members of this distinguished club are:

** Deceased*

* Rocco Buinno	1949 - 1953
* A. H. Geltzeiler	1953 - 1955
* Kenneth McCormick	1955 - 1956
* A.H. Geltzeiler	1956 - 1958
* Joseph Zimmerman	1958 - 1960
* H. George Buckwald	1960 - 1962
* M. Garret Pal	1962 - 1964
* J. Walter Doll	1964 - 1967
* Joseph Kayto	1967 - 1969
Peter Vanola	1969 - 1971
Arthur Mitchko	1971 - 1973
Peter Vanola	1973 - 1975
* Harry Kandell	1975 - 1977
* Ben Risoldi	1977 - 1979
Jerry Lynch	1979 - 1981
* Jerry Bertekap	1981 - 1983
* Carmen Giletto	1983 - 1985
Dominic Bossone	1985 - 1988
* Harold Freundlich	1988 - 1990
* James Fordyce	1990 - 1992
* Theresa Sorgento	1992 - 1994
Paul Bechtel	1994 - 1996
* Lewis B. Rothbart	1996 - 1998
* Joseph Ardire	1998 - 2000
Robert Scerbo	2000 - 2001
* Frank Zanotti	2001 - 2002
* Richard Bellshot	2002 - 2004
James Hill	2004 - 2006
Melvin Gitler	2006 - 2008
Fred Barnes	2008 - 2014
James Bennett	2014 - 2018
James Filler	2018 - 2025

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1953	Eric Reinhardt
1954	David Gfroerer
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1956	Martin Stempel
1957	Bruce A. Hudson
1958	Norman Farber
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1960	Berwin Guttormsen
1961	Albert A. Metz
1962	Myron Smorodsky
1963	Charles Matlock
1964	Ronald Seamans
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1970	Edward Gekosky
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1985	Elizabeth Askew
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1992	Phillip Wylykanowitz
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1995	Anthony Esposito
1995	Timothy Urie
1996	Anna Baginski
1996	Shaun Deignan

1997	Takiya Wilson
1997	Catherine Ponte
1998	Kenneth Graff
1998	Darren Bacon
1999	Thomas Watson
1999	Lillian Ponte
2000	Eric Buzby
2000	Geneva Moody
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2003	Eric McCormick
2003	Gregory J. Buzby
2004	Shawn Peterson
2004	Jacklyn L. Buckingham
2005	Michael Balka
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2006	Christina Rotsides
2006	Michele Russo
2007	Melissa Nogiewich
2007	Michael Pappa
2008	Taylor Kurilew
2008	Sean O'Connor
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2011	John M. Nogiewich
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2012	Demetris Rotsides
2013	Jodi DiSilvestro
2013	Amelia Edwards
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2015	Aine Filler
2015	John Walton Little IV
2016	Mason Shuemate
2016	Julia Weise
2017	Katelyn Connelly
2017	Clark Edwards
2017	William Little
2018	Ryan Ellery
2018	Makenzie Friend
2018	Robert Lynch
2018	Olivia Miller
2019	Grace Little
2019	John McGovern
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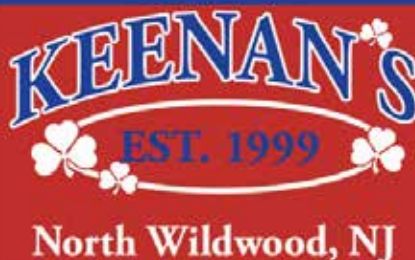
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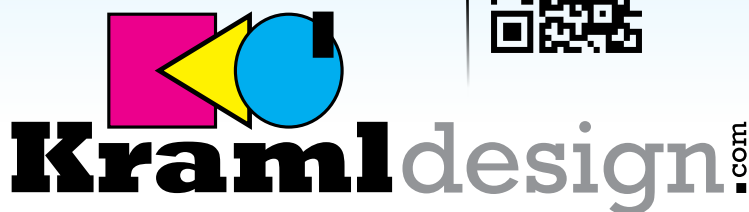
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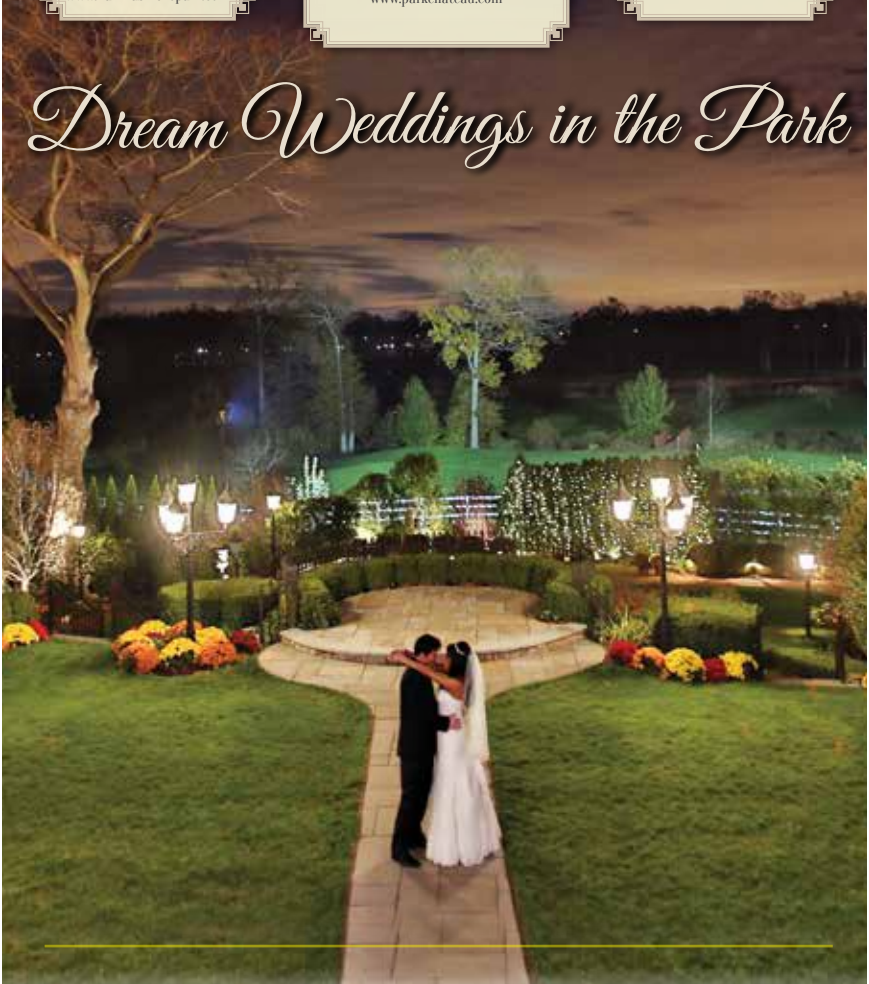
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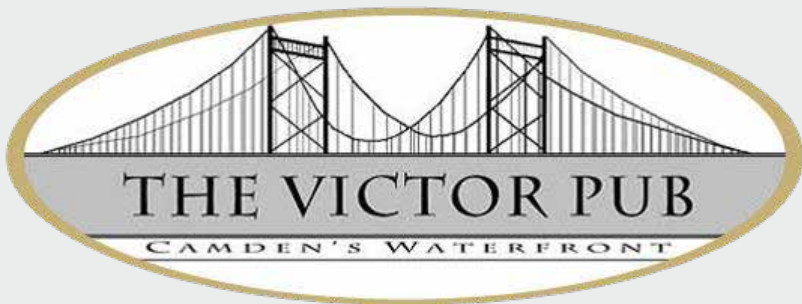
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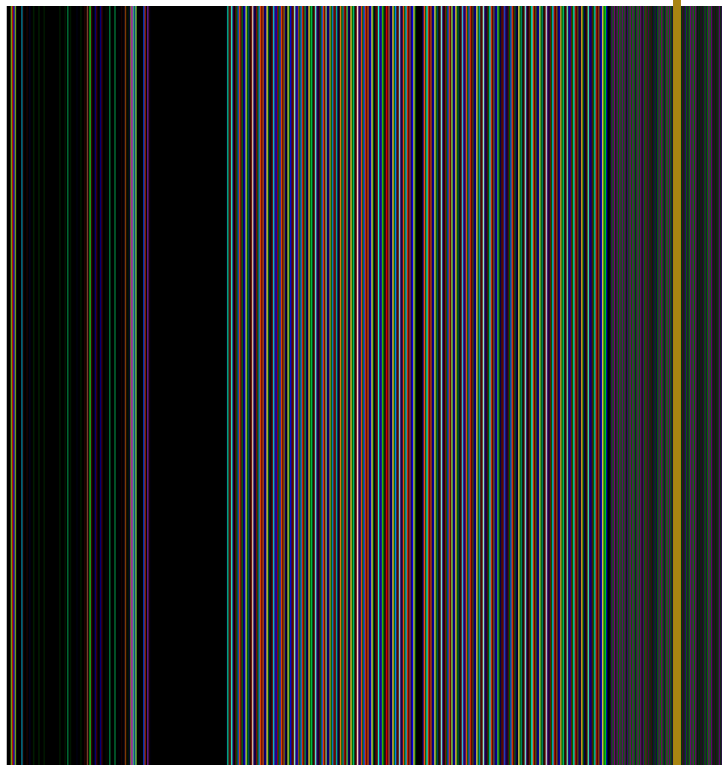
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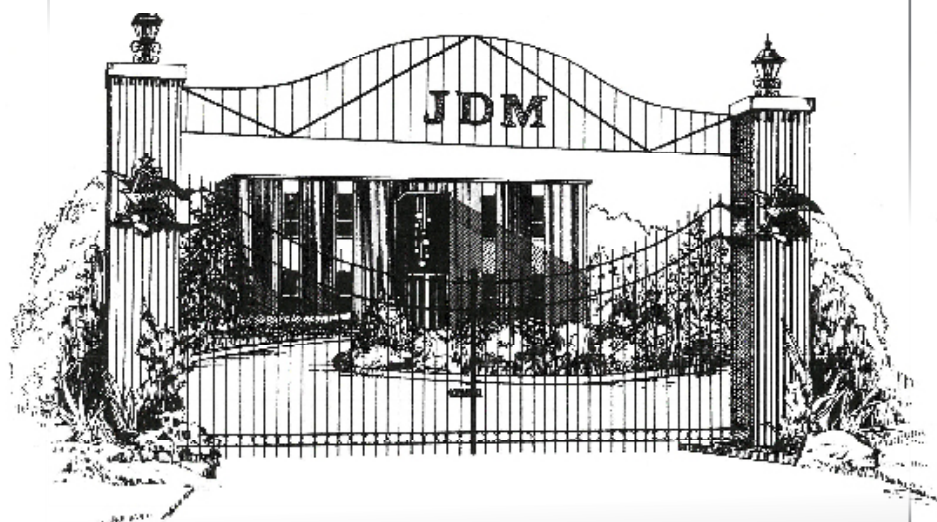
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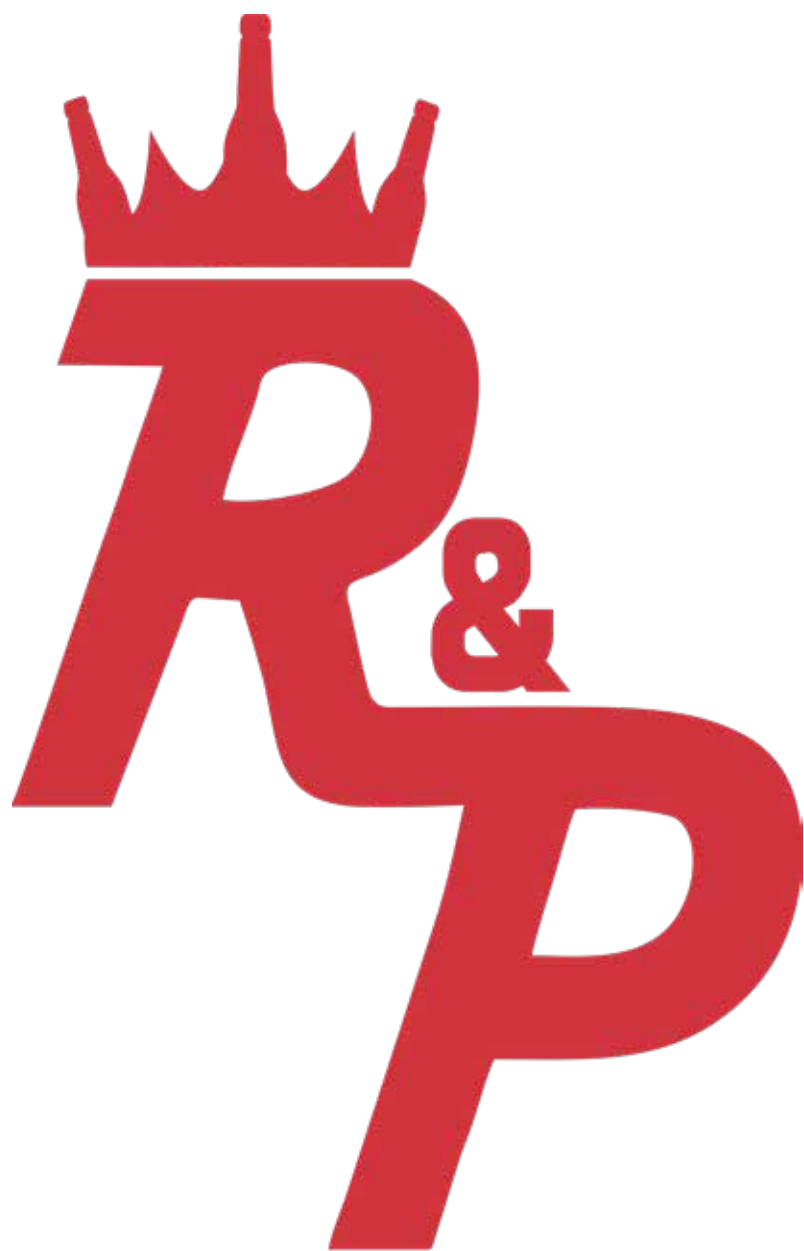


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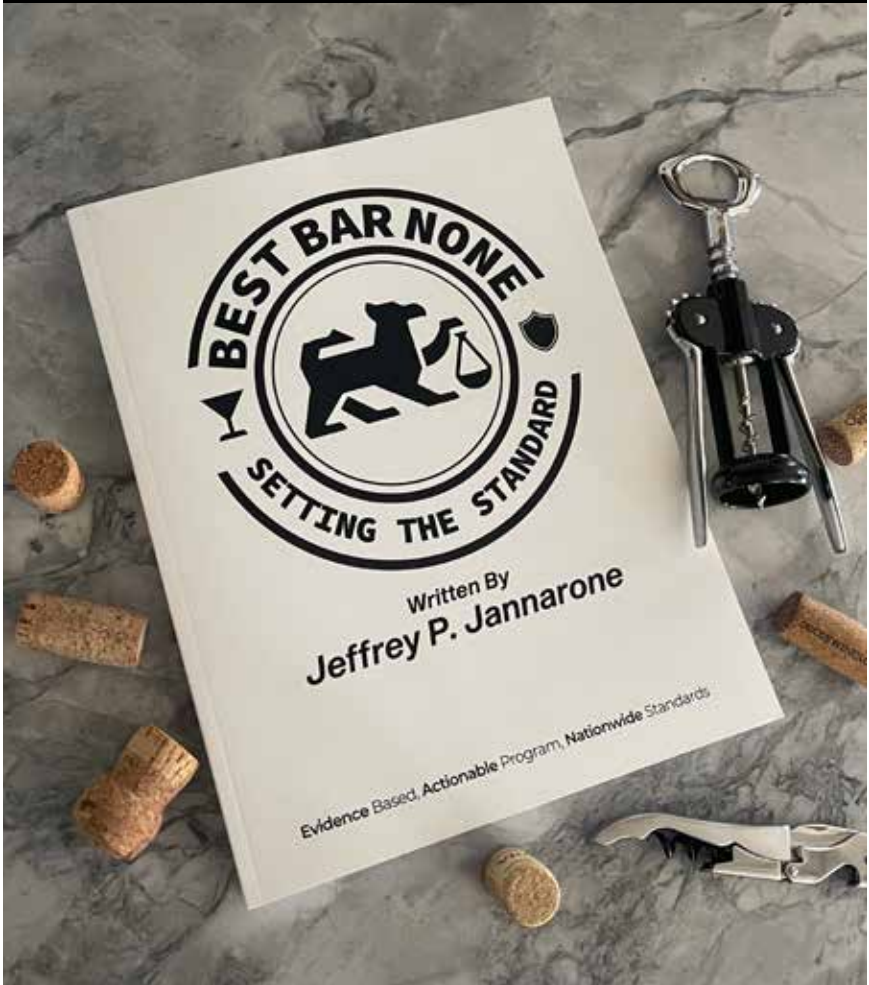
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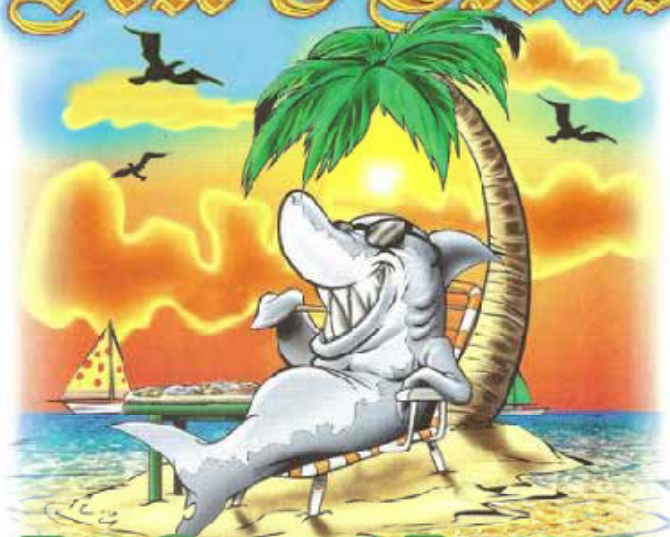
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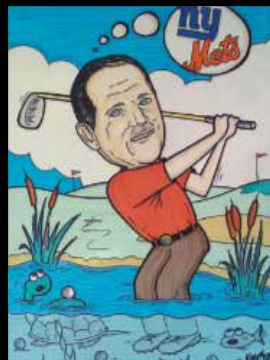
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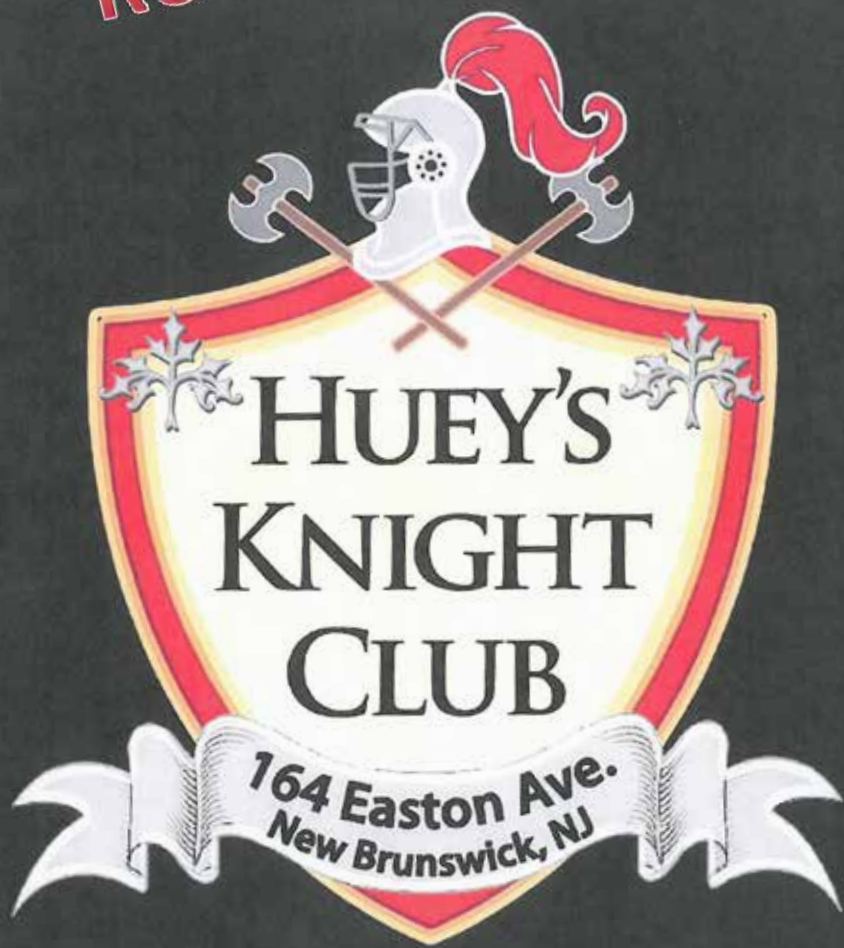
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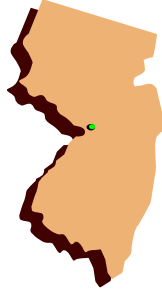
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